

Farm to School Programs.

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Presentation Outline

- What is Farm to School?
- Examples of a few Farm to School programs/legislation currently in action.
- Proposed Farm to School Legislation in South Carolina.
- Where are we and what's next in South Carolina?

What is Farm to School?

- Programs where local farmers are linked with local schools to provide fresh, seasonal produce for school meals and snacks.



Currently only 6 States have funded, state-level Farm to School coordinators.

- Connecticut
- Iowa
- Maryland
- Oklahoma
- Oregon
- Washington

Benefits of having a statewide coordinator:

- Better communication between school districts across the state.
- Better understanding of markets available for farmers participating in the Farm to School Program.
- More effective and consistent communication between farmers, distributors and school districts.

Michigan



- o Changed food procurement regulations to make it easier for school districts to purchase food from local farmers
 - o Increased school districts' small purchase threshold for food procurement from \$23,959 to \$100,000
- o Provides children with greater access to fresh and locally grown food

Washington

- Creates the Washington Grown Fresh Fruit and Vegetable program in the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction
- Eliminates low-cost bidding requirements for school purchases of Washington-grown food
- Allows school districts to operate school gardens to grow fruits and vegetables for educational purposes
- Creates positions in the Dept. of Ag. To work with schools and farmers, helping farmers market their crops to schools
- Provides wireless technology to allow farmers markets to accept food stamps and credit cards

Washington



- o Dedicated to fostering relationships between schools and agricultural producers in the state
- o Supports expanding economic opportunities for farmers while educating students about the connections between food, farming, health, and the environment
- o Provides information, inspiration, assistance, and policy solutions for those working to supply healthy Washington-grown food and related education to youth in the state

California

- o Farmers Market Salad Bar – Contains fruits and vegetables purchased directly from farmers at local markets (serves *only* market purchased products on the salad bar)
- o School gardens developed
- o Beginning to implement “Harvest of the Month Program” to provide nutrition, education and activities to reinforce the importance of good nutrition
- o Edible Education Program – Connects school gardens to the farmers markets
- o California Farm to School Task Force established to better implement the Farm to School Program. Includes: California Dept. of Education, Dept. of Health Services, Dept. of Food and Agriculture, school garden promoters, school food service directors, and others small advocacy groups.

California: Farm to School Task Force

- o **Current task force goals:**

- Identify nutrition education and Farm to School materials appropriate for schools, define the gaps, and develop new materials as needed.
- Provide one-on-one technical assistance to school districts and groups interested in implementing Farm to School nutrition education programs.
- Conduct farmer outreach and training to educate growers about Farm to School nutrition education programs and prepare them to respond to schools.
- Forge collaborations with existing nutrition and health promotion programs and farmer-interest organizations in California to promote Farm to School nutrition education programs.

Florida



- o An initiative to bring nutritious, fresh food from local farms to schools including K-12, colleges and universities
- o Intended to keep more of the millions of dollars spent annually on fresh produce in – state.
- o Supports local economies, reduces transportation costs, and helps to preserve farms and farmland

Idaho

- Connects schools with local farms with the objectives of serving healthy meals in school cafeterias, improving student nutrition, providing health and nutrition education opportunities that will last a lifetime and supporting local small farmers



Idaho

- Activities:

- Healthy Harvest: During the month of September, schools celebrate the local food harvest by educating students about Idaho foods, nutrition, and local agriculture, and serve fresh local food in the cafeterias
- Healthy Idaho Fundraiser: School fundraiser offering a variety of healthy food items from Idaho
- Ag in the Classroom: Training teachers on Idaho foods and nutrition, providing ideas for incorporating Idaho food, nutrition and agriculture into the school day
- Incredible Edible Idaho Monthly Poster Program: Posters provided to school cafeterias and Ag in the Classroom teachers with each monthly poster featuring a different food from Idaho

Farm to School Program – Idaho



Idaho: Benefits

Program Benefits:

☐ For Farmers

- ✓ Opens new direct marketing opportunities to local school districts
- ✓ Strengthens relationships between farmers and the community

☐ For Children

- ✓ Encourages children to develop life-long healthful eating habits
- ✓ Reinforces an appreciation for the importance of farming to the community
- ✓ Instills an appreciation for the cycle of food from seed to table

☐ For the Community

- ✓ Helps maintain local economies by supporting local farms
- ✓ Strengthens urban/rural linkages

Iowa

- o Links elementary, secondary, public and non-public schools with Iowa farmers
- o Provides schools with fresh and minimally processed Iowa grown food for inclusion in school meals and snacks
- o Encourages children to develop healthy eating habits
- o Provides children with hands-on learning opportunities (i.e. farm visits, cooking demonstrations), school gardening programs and composting programs



Proposed Farm to School legislation in South Carolina.

H 3179 – SC Farm to School Program Act.

This bill was introduced in the House on January 13, 2009 by Representatives Cooper, Battle, and H.B. Brown. The bill would enact the “South Carolina Farm to School Program Act”, allowing for a statewide program director under the SC Department of Agriculture as well as a website dedicated to the program initiatives. The bill has passed the House and is waiting to be heard in the Senate Education Committee.

School Snack Legislation in SC

H 3297 – Snacks Sold in Schools. This bill was introduced in the House on January 15, 2009 by Representatives Sellers and E.H. Pitts. The bill would provide fat, calorie and sugar content standards for snack foods and beverages sold in schools. This bill complements the SC Farm to School Program making healthy and locally grown snacks more readily accessible to students. This bill is currently residing in the House Committee on Education and Public Works.

Other Programs supported by the S.C. Department of Agriculture.

- Campus Farmers Markets
- School Gardens

Campus Farmers Markets – General Overview



- The Healthy Carolina Farmers Market is a student-driven farmers market on campus at the University of S.C.
- The purpose is to promote locally grown South Carolina agriculture to college students.
- Held on campus at USC one to two times each month.

Campus Farmers Market - Benefits

- Provides students access to locally grown produce, a fresh and healthy alternative
- Presents local growers with another market outlet
- Gives students and organizations the opportunity for involvement in an on-campus activity
- A chance for university – community interaction, a mutually beneficial partnership
- Market development and implementation can provide basis for classroom case studies

Healthy Carolina Farmers Market.

- Model program for other school campus farmers markets. (Partnership between SC Dept. of Ag and University.)
- Exposing young people to fresh SC produce and building “brand” loyalty.



School Gardens Program

- o SC Department of Agriculture initiative to provide schools and communities alike with the opportunity to learn healthy eating habits.
- o Provides an effective and fun way to instill the appreciation for local agriculture and food production in children.



SC School Gardens Program.



- o Fosters a new element of health, nutrition, exercise, education, and deepening relationships within schools and communities.
- o Incorporates the health benefits of gardening activities with the educational process of development and reinforces the Department of Agriculture's goals related to promoting the consumption of locally grown products.

Eat Smart, It's in the Garden!

- Grant program supported by the S.C. Department of Agriculture and Eat Smart, Move More SC.
- 5 Schools across the state selected for grant funding to implement or improve a vegetable garden program on their school campus.
- For more information, please visit: www.agriculture.sc.gov
- You can also sign up for our quarterly School Garden e-newsletter.



Ag in the Classroom



- Administered by Vonne Baker with the SC Farm Bureau.
- For more information, please visit:
<http://www.scfb.org/getinvolved/agintheclassroom.aspx>